

Sūrah Al-Furqān

Sūrah Al-Furqān was revealed in Makkah and it contains 77 Verses and 6 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the Most-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا ﴿١﴾
 الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ
 شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا ﴿٢﴾ وَاتَّخَذُوا
 مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ
 ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَاةً وَلَا نُشُورًا ﴿٣﴾

Glorious is the One who has revealed the Criterion to His servant, so that he may be a warner to the worlds, [1] the One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and who did neither have a son, nor is there any partner to him in the kingdom, and who has created everything and designed it in a perfect measure. [2]

And they have coined gods, other than Him, who do not create any thing, rather they themselves are created, and they possess no power to cause harm or benefit even to themselves, nor do they have any power over death or life or resurrection. [3]

Special features of the Sūrah

There is consensus among the commentators that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah. However, Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ and Qatādah ؓ

contend that three of its verses are Madanī and rest of the Sūrah is Makkan. Yet Qurṭubī and a few others maintain that the Sūrah itself is Madanī and only a few verses are Makkan.

The gist of the subject matter of the Sūrah is to describe and define the greatness of the Holy Qur'ān and the truth of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, to which there were doubts expressed by the unbelievers. The Sūrah contains answers to their objections.

Commentary

تَبَارَكَ (25:1) is derived from بَرَكَة , meaning abundance of a good thing. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has explained that the meaning of the first verse is that all blessings are from Allah alone. فُرْقَان (Furqān, translated above as 'criterion') is a title of the Qur'ān and its meaning is to distinguish. The Holy Qur'ān by its very nature distinguishes between right and wrong, and differentiates, through miracles between the right people and the wrong ones, hence it is called as Furqān.

لِّلْعَالَمِينَ (warner to the worlds - 25:1). This proves that the Holy Prophet's ﷺ prophethood was for the entire universe and not just for a certain community or time, as was the case with other prophets. In a Ḥadīth recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has pointed out six special features about his prophethood. One of the special features is the universality of his prophethood i.e. it is for all ages and all people.

Special Wisdom in every creation

فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا (And designed it in a perfect measure - 25:2): Here تَقْدِير - (designing in a perfect measure) is mentioned after تَخْلِيق (Creation). تَخْلِيق means to create something from nothing that is to bring in something without any pre-existing substance whatsoever. And تَقْدِير (designed in a perfect measure) means that, whatever has been created, its components, appearance, properties and signs are made to suit the purpose of its creation. The form of the sky, its constituents and its shape are in conformity to that purpose for which Allah Ta'ālā has created it. Similarly, the stars and planets possess those qualities for which they are created. Whatever we see on the earth is absolutely perfect in its form, shape and construction to suit the purpose and requirement of its creation. For instance, earth is not made in such a liquid form, that anything put on it is drowned, nor is it made too hard like steel or

concrete to be dug. It is made in the solid form and given a hardness that it could be dug to take out underground water or to place foundations for the buildings. Water is given the liquid form which again is full of Divine Wisdom and helps meet the multifarious needs of the creatures spread all over the earth. Water does not reach on its own at all the places where it is needed. Man has to put in some skill and labour to take it to places where it is required. On the other hand air is a compulsory gift which reaches every place without any labour or an active role from human beings. Even if someone wants to avoid it, he has to exert extra labour. It is not the place to describe Divine creations and their characteristics as it needs volumes for the purpose. Each and every creation of Allah Subḥanahū is perfect in its purpose and has its own peculiar properties and traits. Imām Ghazzālī has written a book on the subject by the name *الحكمة فى مخلوقات الله تعالى*.

These verses define the sacred and exalted position of the Holy Qur'ān and by addressing the person on whom the book is revealed as عَبْدُهُ (His slave) in the very beginning of the Sūrah, his honoured position is highlighted. There cannot be a greater honour for any one than to be called by Allah Ta'ālā as 'His own'..

Verses 4 - 9

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا إِفْكٌ افْتَرَاهُ وَأَعَانَهُ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ آخَرُونَ فَقَدْ جَاءُوا ظُلْمًا وَزُورًا ﴿٤﴾ وَقَالُوا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ اكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِيَ تُمْلَى عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٥﴾ قُلْ أَنْزَلَهُ الَّذِي يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٦﴾ وَقَالُوا مَالِ هَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ لَوْلَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيَكُونُ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا ﴿٧﴾ أَوْ يُلْقَى إِلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنَّ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا ﴿٨﴾ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩﴾

And said those who disbelieve, "This is nothing but a lie

he (the messenger) has fabricated and some other people have helped him in it." Thus they came up with transgression and falsehood. [4] And they said, "(These are) the tales of the ancients he (the messenger) has caused to be written, and they are read out to him at morn and eve." [5] Say, "It is sent down by the One who knows the secret in the heavens and the earth. Indeed He is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [6]

And they said, "What sort of messenger is this who eats food and walks in the markets? Why is it that an angel has not been sent down to him who would have been a warner alongwith him, [7] or that a treasure is not thrown down to him, or that he has no garden to eat from it?" And the transgressors said, "You are following none but a bewitched man." [8] See how they coined similes for you, so they have gone astray and cannot find a way. [9]

Commentary

From this point onward the objections raised by infidels and polytheists against the Holy Qur'ān and the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are related together with the answers to those objections.

The first objection was that the Qur'ān was not a revealed book from Allah Ta'ālā, but has been compiled from the old stories and narrations by the Jews and Christians which have been reduced into writing by the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, since he himself was illiterate and could not write. And because he could not read or write, he would get them read out to him day and night, so that he could remember them by heart, then he would repeat them before people and claim that he had received that revelation from Allah Ta'ālā.

The answer to this objection was given by the Holy Qur'ān قُلْ أَنْزَلَهُ الَّذِي يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ, that is (Say, "It is sent down by the One who knows the secret in the heavens and the earth - 25:6).

The essence of this answer is that the Qur'ān itself is an evidence to the fact that it is the Divine message from Him who is Omniscient and who knows fully well all the secrets of the Heavens and the earth. This is why Qur'ān is a miraculous Message, and the whole world is challenged to bring out a Sūrah or even a verse to match it, if its divine origin is

refused. This was a challenge to a people - the Arabs - who were well known for their literary proficiency and art of expression, and for whom composition of a piece of literature was not a problem. But they too did not dare to attempt to compose something similar to Qur'ān. Although they were willing to sacrifice all their material wealth for opposing the Holy Prophet ﷺ in his mission, so much so that they were willing to sacrifice even their children and their own lives to counter the Holy Prophet's ﷺ mission and message, but they dared not attempt to compose a passage similar to a Sūrah of the Qur'ān.

This is a clear proof of the fact that it is not a work of a human being. Otherwise other people could also have composed passages similar to Qur'ān. Therefore, it is definitely the revelation from Allah Ta'ālā. Apart from the beauty of expression and language, the Book also excels in its meanings. The multifarious subjects it covers can only be dealt by One who knows everything whether hidden or exposed. This subject has been dealt with in detail in the first volume of Ma'āriful Qur'ān.

The Second Objection was that if the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a prophet, he should not have been eating and drinking like common people; instead he should have been free from eating and drinking like angels. And if this was not so, he should have at least enough wealth and gardens to take care of his day to day needs, so that he may not need to care for his living. Furthermore, how could he be accepted as a prophet when he is neither an angel nor does an angel accompany him to endorse what he preaches, therefore it appears that he has been charmed by someone which has turned his head and that is why he talks like this. A general answer to this objection is given in the verse أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا that is (See how they coined similes for you, so they have gone astray and cannot find a way. - 25:9). The detailed answer to the objection is given in the next few verses.

Verses 10 - 20

تَبَرَّكَ الَّذِي إِن شَاءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْرًا مِّنْ ذَلِكَ جَنَّتِ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكَ قُصُورًا ﴿١٠﴾ بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالسَّاعَةِ ۖ وَاعْتَدْنَا

لِمَنْ كَذَّبَ بِالسَّاعَةِ سَعِيرًا ﴿١٠﴾ إِذَا رَأَتْهُمْ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ سَمِعُوا لَهَا تَغِيْطًا وَزَفِيرًا ﴿١١﴾ وَإِذَا أُلْقُوا مِنْهَا مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا مُّقَرَّنِينَ دَعَوْا هُنَالِكَ ثُبُورًا ﴿١٢﴾ لَا تَدْعُوا الْيَوْمَ ثُبُورًا وَاحِدًا وَادْعُوا ثُبُورًا كَثِيرًا ﴿١٣﴾ قُلْ أَذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ جَنَّةُ الْخُلْدِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ ۖ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَرَآءٌ وَمَصِيرًا ﴿١٤﴾ لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ خُلْدٌ ۖ كَانَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ وَعْدًا مَسْئُولًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَقُولُ ۖ أَنْتُمْ أَضَلَلْتُمْ عِبَادِي هَؤُلَاءِ أَمْ هُمْ ضَلُّوا السَّبِيلَ ﴿١٦﴾ قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ مَا كَانَ يَنْبَغِي لَنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ مِنْ دُونِكَ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَكِنْ مَتَّعْتَهُمْ وَأَبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ نَسُوا الذِّكْرَ وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا بُورًا ﴿١٧﴾ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ بِمَا تَقُولُونَ ۖ فَمَا تَسْتَطِيعُونَ صَرْفًا وَلَا نَصْرًا ۚ وَمَنْ يَظْلِمِ مِنْكُمْ نَذِقْهُ عَذَابًا كَبِيرًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا إِنَّهُمْ لَيَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشُونَ فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ ۚ وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً ۚ أَتَصْبِرُونَ ۚ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾

Glorious is the One who, if He so wills, would give you better than that - gardens beneath which rivers flow, and would give you palaces. [10] But they have disbelieved the Hour (the Day of Judgment) and We have prepared, for those who disbelieve the Hour, a flaming fire. [11] When it will see them from a distant place, they will hear (the sounds of) its raging and breathing, [12] and when they will be thrown into a narrow place therein, while they will be chained together, they will call for death. [13] Do not call for one death today, but call for many a death. [14]

Say, "Is that better or the eternal paradise the God-fearing are promised?" It will be a reward for them and a final abode. [15] For them there will be whatever they wish, while they will be living for ever. This is a promise undertaken by your Lord, (the fulfillment of)

which will be prayed for. [16]

And (remember) the Day when He will gather them and what they used to worship beside Allah and will say (to the latter ones), "Did you mislead these My servants or did they themselves lost the way?" [17] They will say, "Pure are you. It was not for us to take to other guardians than You. Instead, You gave them and their fathers (worldly) benefits till they forgot the advice and became a ruined people." [18] Thus they will refute you in what you say and you will not be able to repulse (the punishment) or to receive help. And whoever commits injustice from among you, We will make him taste a painful punishment. [19]

And We did not send any messengers before you, but all of them used to eat food and walk in the markets. And We have made some of you a test for some others. Would you observe patience? And your Lord is Ever-seeing. [20]

Commentary

In the forgoing verses a general answer was given to the doubts raised by the infidels and polytheists in regard to prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Here in the above verses a detailed reply is given to the objections. The gist of the reply is that because of your ignorance and mental block you have raised the issue that if he ﷺ were really a prophet, then he should have possessed a great deal of material wealth and gardens etc. so that he should have been free from making efforts for his sustenance. The simple reply to this objection is that there is no problem for Us to provide material wealth to Our messengers; rather if We so wish we can make them kings of the mammoth empires, as we had done in the case of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام and Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام, who were made rulers of the gigantic empires and were endowed with enormous wealth, which is a clear sign of Our omnipotence. But in the interest of common people and other numerous considerations, it is required that prophets should be kept away from the material wealth of the world. Especially in the case of the Holy Prophet ﷺ it was preferred by Allah Ta'ālā to keep him in line with the ordinary Muslims by way of worldly possessions, and he also preferred for himself to be like that. It is reported in the Musnad of Aḥmad and in Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā

Abū 'Umāmah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that Allah Ta'ālā offered to him to turn the entire valley and hills of Makkah into gold for him. On that he requested to Him "No my Lord, I would prefer that I get sustenance one day (to offer my thanks to You) and go without food the next (to be patient). Also, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها has reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said "If I wanted, mountains of gold would have been around me." (Maḡharī)

The sum and substance of all this is that it is Allah's wisdom to keep the prophets poor which is also in the best interest of the people at large. Also, the prophets are not forced to lead a poor life. On the contrary they have a choice either to opt for an ordinary simple life or else Allah Ta'ālā can make them wealthy with a lot of property. But Allah Ta'ālā has made them such that they do not desire any material wealth and instead prefer a simple and poor life for themselves.

The second objection infidels had raised was that if he ﷺ was really a prophet, he would not have been eating and drinking like ordinary people nor would he walk in the markets to earn his livelihood. This objection was based on the assumption of many infidels that Allah's messengers could only be angels and not humans. The answer to this false notion is given in the Holy Qur'ān at several places. The answer given here is that the prophets whom you admit to be prophets were also humans and not angels. They used to eat, drink and work like ordinary human beings. Hence you should have deduced from this that eating and drinking is not something repugnant to prophethood. The last verse وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ لِيَأْكُلُوا الطَّعَامَ (And We did not send any messengers before you, but all of them used to eat food - 25:20) has put forward the same argument.

There is great wisdom in economic difference between people

وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً (And We have made some of you test for some others - 25:20). There is an allusion in the verse that Allah Ta'ālā had complete power to make all humans wealthy, prosperous, healthy and of high status. But this way nobody would have been poor, weak or sick - a position which would have created innumerable social problems resulting in chaos and confusion. Therefore, Allah Ta'ālā has made some rich and some poor, some healthy and some sick, some strong and some weak, and some with high status and some others unknown. This way every single individual is at test because of his or her peculiar placing in society and

community. The rich and healthy people are at test for their thankfulness, while poor and sick persons are on trial for their patience. For this very reason the Holy Prophet ﷺ has advised that whenever you see someone who is wealthier, healthier, stronger or higher in status you should at once try to turn towards those who are lower than you in wealth, health, strength and status so that instead of feeling jealous, which is a sin, you should thank Allah Ta'ālā for giving you better placing in this world as against those who have less than you. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Maḡharī)

Verses 21 - 22

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَ نَا لَوْلَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ نَرَى رَبَّنَا
لَقَدْ اسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَعَتَوْا عُتْوًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ
لَا بُشْرَى يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُجْرِمِينَ يَقُولُونَ جِئْنَا مَحْجُورًا ﴿٢٢﴾

And said those who do not apprehend to meet Us, "Why the angels are not sent down to us or why do we not see our Lord?" Indeed they think too highly of themselves and have gone too far in rebellion. [21] The Day they will see the angels, there will be no good news for the sinners that day, and they will say , "(We need) a shelter, fully protected!" [22]

Commentary

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَ نَا (And said those who do not believe in meeting Us - 25:21). رَجَاءَ (Rajā:) means to hope for something desired. Sometimes it is also used for having fear, as mentioned by Ibn-al-Ambārī, the famous scholar of Arabic lexicon. Here in this verse it is used for apprehension and fear. Thus the meaning of the phrase is 'those who are not apprehensive of being brought before Us'. The allusion is toward those who totally deny the Hereafter as only they could have the courage to raise such preposterous and absurd points and put such frivolous demands. Those who believe in the Hereafter dread it so much all the time that they have no time to waste over such ridiculous ideas. In the present time those who appear to be unsure about the teachings and injunctions of Islam and indulge in dubious debate and arguments under

the influence of modern education allude toward weakness of their faith in the Hereafter. When one attains total faith in the Hereafter then there is no question of having such dubious doubts.

جُجْرًا مَحْجُورًا (25:22) The literal meaning of جُجْر is protection, and مَحْجُورًا is fully protected. This word was used in Arabic language at the time of danger, when there was a danger in sight. The word was used to seek protection - that is to ask for protection against the imminent danger. Likewise, on the Dooms Day when the infidels will see angels approaching toward them with chastisement, they will utter this word as per their habit in this world to seek protection. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has described the meaning of this word حَرَامًا مُحَرَّمًا (that is banned, prohibited).

According to this interpretation, the phrase will mean that on the Dooms Day when the infidels will see the angels approaching them with chastisement, they will seek their pardon and plead to let them in the paradise. In response to their pleading the angels will reply جُجْرًا مَحْجُورًا - that is the Paradise is banned and prohibited for infidels. (Mazharī)

Verses 23 - 31

وَقَدِمْنَا إِلَى مَا عَمِلُوا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاءً مَنْثُورًا ﴿٢٣﴾ أَصْحَابُ
الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَيْرٌ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَأَحْسَنُ مَقِيلًا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَشَقُّقُ
السَّمَاءُ بِالْغَمَامِ وَنُزِّلَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ تَنْزِيلًا ﴿٢٥﴾ الْمَلِكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ
لِلرَّحْمَنِ ۖ وَكَانَ يَوْمًا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ عَسِيرًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ
عَلَى يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَلَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا ﴿٢٧﴾ يُولَيْتَنِي
لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ
إِذْ جَاءَنِي ۖ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِلْإِنْسَانِ خَذُولًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ
يَرَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا
لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ۖ وَكَفَى بِرَبِّكَ هَادِيًا وَنَصِيرًا ﴿٣١﴾

And We will come to whatever deeds they did and will

turn them into scattered dust. [23] The people of Paradise, on that day will be the best in (terms of their) abode and best in (terms of their) resting-place. [24]

And the Day the sky will break open with a cloud and the angels are sent down in a majestic descent, [25] the Kingdom on that day will be for the Raḥmān, and for the disbelievers it will be a difficult day. [26] And (Be mindful of) the Day the wrongdoer will bite his hands saying, "Would that I had taken a path alongwith the messenger! [27] Woe to me! Would that I had not taken so-and-so for my friend! [28] Indeed he led me astray from the advice after it had come to me." And the Satan is man's betrayer. [29] And the messenger will say, "O my Lord, my people had taken this Qur'ān as a thing to be deserted." [30]

And in a similar way We made for every prophet an enemy from among the sinners, but your Lord suffices as a guide and as a supporter. [31]

Commentary

خَيْرٌ مُّسْتَقَرًّا وَاحْسَنُ مَقِيلًا (The best in (terms of their) abode and best in (terms of their) resting-place - 25:24). Permanent residence is called مُّسْتَقَرٌّ while مَقِيلٌ is derived from قِيلُوهُ which means siesta. Hence مَقِيلٌ means the place for having siesta. Probably مَقِيلٌ is specifically mentioned here because it is referred in one of the traditions that on the Dooms day Allah Ta'ālā will complete reckoning of the entire creation by noon and the people of paradise will reach Paradise at the time of siesta and so will the condemned in the Hell. (Qurṭubī)

تَشَقُّقُ السَّمَاءِ بِالْغَمَامِ (The sky will break open with a cloud - 25:25). The explanation of the verse is that the sky will rip apart and a sort of liquid cloud will descend from it which will be carrying angels with it. This cloud will look like a canopy descending from the sky and will be bearing Allah Ta'ālā's refulgence surrounded by angels. This will precede the beginning of the reckoning and the sky will rip open only to make an opening. It will not be the same ripping as the one when the ṣūr (صُور) will be blown to finish off the earth and the sky, because this descension of the cloud will take place after the second blowing of the ṣūr (صُور) when the earth and the sky would have taken the new shape. (Bayān ul-Qur'ān)

يَوْنِلَيَّ لَيَّتِي لَمْ آتِخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيلًا (Woe to me! would that I had not taken so-and-so for my friend - 25:28). This verse was revealed on an especial occasion, but its implication is universal. The background is that 'Uqbah Ibn Abī Mu'aiṭ was one of the chieftains of polytheists in Makkah. It was customary with him that whenever he would return after an expedition, he used to invite the nobility of the city to dinner. He also used to call on the Holy Prophet ﷺ frequently. When he presented the food to the Holy Prophet ﷺ he said "I cannot eat your food until you proclaim that Allah is one and no one can be associated with Him in worship and that I am His Rasūl." 'Uqbah recited this sentence and then the Holy Prophet ﷺ ate the dinner according to his promise, 'Ubayy Ibn Khalaf was a close friend of 'Uqbah. When he learnt that 'Uqbah has accepted Islam and has recited the Kalimah Ṭayyabah he was very crossed with him. 'Uqbah tried to defend himself by explaining that Muḥammad ﷺ was an eminent person of Quraysh and if he had returned without having his meal at his house, it would have been very degrading for 'Uqbah. Therefore, in order to please him, he repeated the sentence (كلمه). 'Ubayy Ibn Khalaf did not accept this explanation and asked 'Uqbah to go and spit on Holy Prophet's ﷺ face if he was really ashamed. The wretched man obliged his depraved friend and did as he had suggested. Allah Ta'ālā disgraced them both in this world as well, as both were killed in the battle of Badr (Baghawī). The torment he will face on the Dooms day is described in this verse that when he will see the torment before him, he will bite his fingers in distress and repentance and say "would that he had not made 'Ubayy Ibn Khalaf his friend in the world". (Maḏharī & Qurṭubī)

Friendship of wicked persons and non believers will be a matter of shame and repentance in the Hereafter

It is explained in Tafsīr Maḏharī that although these verses were revealed in respect of the 'Uqbah, yet the moral of the verse is universal. This can be noticed by the use of the word فُلَانًا (so-and-so) in the verse, which alludes that the message is universal. The moral that can be deduced from these verses is that when two friends get together in acts of immorality and sin and help each other in performing forbidden deeds, then the same will apply to them and they will be remorseful and feel sorry for their friendship in the Hereafter. Musnād Aḥmed, Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd etc. have reproduced a narration on the authority of Sayyidnā

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said لا تصاحب الا مؤمنا (Do not make a non-Muslim your friend and your possessions should be used only by the pious persons.- Maḏharī), that is, do not have the non-pious as your friend. And Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ has reported a tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ :

المرء على دين خليله فلينظر من يخال (رواه البخاري)

Every person is influenced by the faith and way of life of his friends. Therefore, one must be very mindful when selecting his friends. (Bukhārī)

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked what sort of friends should we keep in our company. To this he replied :

من ذكركم بالله رويته، وزاد في علمكم منطقه، وذكركم بالآخرة عمله (رواه البراء)
(قرطبي)

The one who reminds you of Allah when you see him, and adds to your knowledge when he speaks, and reminds you of the Hereafter when he acts. (Qurṭubī)

وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَرْبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا (That is Rasūl ﷺ will say, O my Lord my people have forgotten and forsaken Qur'ān - 25:30). There is a difference of opinion among the commentators whether this complaint of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to Allah Ta'ālā about his people would be on Dooms Day or was made in his life time. Both views appear valid. But the verse following this verse suggests that he made this complaint during his lifetime and the next verse was revealed to appease him. The next verse reads وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ (In a similar way We made for every prophet an enemy from among the sinners - 25:31). It means that if your adversaries do not accept Qur'ān, it is not something new. In the past as well people have defied Our message and the messengers had to contend with that. The best course for you also is to be contended.

Abandoning to follow Qur'ān is a great sin

On the face of it abandonment of Qur'ān means its denial or non non-acceptance, which is expected only from the infidels. However, in certain traditions it is reported that those Muslim who do believe in the Qur'ān but neither they read it nor try to follow it fall as much within the ambit of this category of people. Sayyidnā Anas ؓ has quoted the Holy

Prophet ﷺ as saying:

من تعلم القرآن وعلق مصحفه لم يتعاهده ولم ينظر فيه جاء يوم القيمة متعلقا به
يقول: يا ربّ العلمين ان عبدك هذا اتخذني مهجوراً فاقض بيني و بينه. ذكره
الثعلبي (قرطبي)

The person who has learnt Qur'ān and then hanged it (on the wall), neither he recites it routinely nor ponders over its injunctions will be brought on the Doomsday with Qur'ān hanging by his neck with a sling, and will complain before Allah Ta'ālā 'this servant of Yours had abandoned me, so decide between me and him'. (Qurṭubī)

Verse 32

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً ۚ كَذَلِكَ ۚ
لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلاً ﴿٣٢﴾

And said those who disbelieved, "Why has the Qur'ān not been revealed to him all at once?" (It has been sent down) in this way (i.e. in parts) so that We make your heart firm, and We revealed it little by little. [32]

Commentary

The sequence of objections by the infidels and polytheists and their answers, which had started in the beginning of the Sūrah, is continuing. Here in this verse the objection as to why the Qur'ān was revealed gradually bit by bit and not in one go is answered. The wisdom behind gradual revelation of the Qur'ān as explained in the verse is that it was to keep the heart of the Holy Prophet ﷺ firm and strong. By gradual revelation the Holy Prophet's ﷺ heart was made strong in the following manner:

1. It was made easy for him to remember the Qur'ān by heart. If the whole Book was revealed in one go, its remembrance by heart would not have been that easy. Remembrance of the Qur'ān by heart expelled all worries from his heart.

2. Whenever an objection was raised by the infidels or a maltreatment was perpetrated, a verse would reveal to give him fortitude. In case the entire Qur'ān was revealed in one piece and the fortitude for the special

occasion had also been mentioned in it, its search in the Book would have been painstaking. Moreover, it would have been uncertain whether or not the attention of the Holy Prophet ﷺ would be drawn to the particular verse

3. Instant response by way of revelation to answer awkward questions was by itself the confirmation of Allah Ta'ālā's support which is the biggest source of strength for the heart. The wisdom of keeping the heart strong is not dependent on gradual revelations alone. Other factors in this regard are mentioned in the following verse of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl وَقرآنًا فرقناه (And We have divided the Qur'an in portion, so that you may recite it to the people gradually - 17:106). (Bayān ul-Qur'an)

Verses 33 - 36

وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ الَّذِينَ يُحْشَرُونَ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ شَرٌّ مَكَانًا وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٣٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَا مَعَهُ أَخَاهُ هَارُونَ وَزِيرًا ﴿٣٥﴾ فَقُلْنَا اذْهَبَا إِلَى الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَدَمْزَلْنَهُمْ تَدْمِيرًا ﴿٣٦﴾

And they bring to you no hypothesis, but We bring to you the correct position and (an answer) better explained. [33]

Those who will be driven on their faces to hell - they are the worst in situation and far more astray from the path. [34]

And surely We gave Mūsā the Book and appointed his brother Hārūn as a minister with him. [35] So we said, "Go, both of you, to the people who have rejected Our signs" Then We annihilated them totally. [36]

Commentary

Verse no. 33 supports and accentuates the explanation given above for the wisdom in the gradual revelation of Qur'an in as much as it promises Allah's support in any situation of awkward questions asked by the

infidel.

الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا (who have rejected Our signs - 25:36). Here it is described that the people of Pharaoh had denied Allah's verses. It is to be noted that by that time Torah was not revealed to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. Therefore it cannot be Torah which was denied. Hence it is either the proofs of the Oneness of Allah, which can be understood by any one according to his mental level, or the traditions of the past prophets which are passed on through generations, no matter in what little detail, are referred here as rejection of His message. The same thing is referred in Qur'ān as well وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ (Joseph brought you the clear signs before - 40:34). It mentions about the teachings of the earlier prophets, which had also reached them. (Bayān ul-Qur'ān)

Verses 37 - 44

وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ لَمَّا كَذَّبُوا الرُّسُلَ أَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ سَلَكًا لِلنَّاسِ آيَةً ط
وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿٣٧﴾ وَعَادًا وَثَمُودًا وَأَصْحَابَ الرَّسِّ
وَقُرُونًا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٨﴾ وَكُلًّا ضَرَبْنَا لَهُ الْأَمْثَالَ وَكُلًّا تَبَّرْنَا
تَتْبِيرًا ﴿٣٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ اتَّوَا عَلَى الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي أُمِطِرَتْ مَطَرِ السَّوَاءِ ط أَفَلَمْ
يَكُونُوا يَرُونَهَا بَلْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ نُشُورًا ﴿٤٠﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَوْكَ إِذَا
يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلَّا هُزُؤًا أَهَذَا الَّذِي بَعَثَ اللَّهُ رَسُولًا ﴿٤١﴾ إِنْ كَادَ
لَيُضِلَّنَا عَنْ إِلَهِنَا لَوْلَا أَنْ صَبَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا ط وَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ حِينَ
يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ مَنْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٤٢﴾ أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ ط
أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٤٣﴾ أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ
أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ ط إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٤٤﴾

As for the people of Nūḥ, when they rejected the messengers, We drowned them and made them an example for mankind. And We have prepared a painful punishment for the transgressors. [37] And (We annihilated also the peoples of) 'Ād and Thamūd and the

people of Rass and many generations in between them.

[38]

And to each (of them) We cited examples, and each of them We brought to utter ruin. [39]

And indeed they (the pagans of Makkah) have passed by the town that was afflicted by an evil rain sent down to it. So, have they not been seeing it? Rather, they do not believe in Resurrection. [40] And when they see you, they take you as nothing but a laughing stock, (saying) "Is this the man whom Allah has sent as a messenger? [41] He would have almost led us astray from our gods, had we not been so firm towards them." And they will know when they will see the punishment, who is farther astray in his way. [42] Tell me about the one who has taken his desire as his god, would you then, become a guardian for him? [43] Or do you think that most of them listen or understand? They are nothing but like cattle. Rather, they are even farther astray in their way. [44]

Commentary

In the above verses it is mentioned that it had been the common practice of the people through the ages to rebuff the prophets and the message they had brought. In order to give weight to this assertion a few of the well known prophets are mentioned who were rejected by their people and then they were subjected to Allah's wrath and were annihilated completely. By drawing a parallel with the past generations it is elucidated that the pagans of Makkah would not listen to any reason as they were no better than the animals or even worse than that.

It is stated about the people of Sayyidnā Nūḥ (عليه السلام) that they had rejected the prophets, although they had neither seen the past prophets nor had they rejected them. What is actually meant here is that while denying Sayyidnā Nūḥ (عليه السلام) they had by implication rejected all the prophets, because the principals of religion expounded by all prophets are essentially the same. Hence rejection of one prophet is tantamount to rejection of all.

أَصْحَابَ الرَّسِّ (People of Rass - 25:38). In Arabic رَسٌّ (Rass) means unlined well. Neither Qur'ān nor any authentic tradition describes these people in

any detail. Whatever information is available about them is through Israelite traditions, which differ from one another. It is more likely that the remaining people of Thamūd had settled down near a well. It is not mentioned in the Qur'ān or any tradition as to how they were tormented. (Bayān ul-Qur'ān)

Following forbidden things - a type of idolatry

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ (Tell me about the one who has taken his desire as his god - 25:43). The one who practises forbidden things which are against the tenets of Islam to satisfy his personal desires is described in this verse as the worshiper of his own lust. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said that the selfish desires are like an idol which is worshipped (by the infidels) and then he recited this verse to prove his point. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 45 - 62

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَجَعَلَهُ سَاكِنًا ۚ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا
 الشَّمْسُ عَلِيهِ دَلِيلًا ﴿٤٥﴾ ثُمَّ قَبَضْنَاهُ إِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا يَسِيرًا ﴿٤٦﴾ وَهُوَ
 الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا وَالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا وَجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُورًا
 ﴿٤٧﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ ۚ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ
 السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا ﴿٤٨﴾ لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيِّتًا وَنُسْقِيَهُ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَا
 أَنْعَامًا وَأَنَاسِيَّ كَثِيرًا ﴿٤٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَاهُ بَيْنَهُمْ لِيَذَّكَّرُوا ۚ فَأَلَّى
 أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَبَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ نَذِيرًا
 ﴿٥١﴾ فَلَا تَطِيعُ الْكُفْرَيْنِ وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٥٢﴾
 وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ ۚ
 وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا وَحِجْرًا مَحْجُورًا ﴿٥٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ مِنَ
 الْمَاءِ بَشَرًا فَجَعَلَهُ نَسَبًا وَصِهْرًا ۚ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ قَدِيرًا ﴿٥٤﴾ وَيَعْبُدُونَ
 مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَلَا يَضُرُّهُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ الْكَافِرُ عَلَى رَبِّهِ

ظَهِيرًا ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٥٦﴾ قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا ﴿٥٧﴾ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَىٰ الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِهِ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِهِ بِذُنُوبِ عِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا ﴿٥٨﴾ ۚ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۚ الرَّحْمَنُ فَسُئِلَ بِهِ خَبِيرًا ﴿٥٩﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اسْجُدُوا لِلرَّحْمَنِ قَالُوا وَمَا الرَّحْمَنُ أَنَسْجُدُ لِمَا تَأْمُرُنَا وَزَادَهُمْ نُفُورًا ﴿٦٠﴾ تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا مُنِيرًا ﴿٦١﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ خِلْفَةً لِّمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَذَّكَّرَ أَوْ أَرَادَ شُكُورًا ﴿٦٢﴾

Have you not turned your vision to your Lord, how He prolonged the shadow? And if He so willed, He would have made it stand still. Then We made the sun an indicator for it. [45] Then We pulled it toward Us in a gradual manner. [46] And He is the One who has made the night an apparel for you, and the sleep a means of rest and has made the day a means of revival. [47] And He is the One who has sent the winds conveying good news before His mercy. And we have sent down purifying water from the heavens, [48] so that We revive a dead land therewith and give drink to the many cattle and humans We have created. [49] And We have distributed it (the water) among them, so that they may take lesson, then most of the people opted for nothing but ungratefulness. [50]

And if We so willed, We would have sent a warner in every town. [51] So do not obey the infidels and strive against them with it (the Qur'an) a great striving. [52]

And He is the One who joined the two seas - this is sweat, very sweat, and this is bitter, very bitter - and made between them a buffer and a barrier, prohibited (to cross). [53] And He is the One who created man from water, then made of him kinship of blood and kinship of

in-laws. And your Lord is All-Powerful. [54]

And they worship, instead of Allah, what can neither give them any benefit nor can cause them any harm. And the disbeliever is always a supporter (of Satan) against his Lord. [55] And We did not send you but as a bearer of good news and as a warner. [56] Say, "I do not demand from you any fee except that whoever so wills should adopt a way to his Lord. [57] And place your trust in the Ever-Living who cannot die, and proclaim His purity alongwith His praise. And enough is He to be aware of the sins of His slaves, [58] the One who created the heavens and the earth and whatever lies between them in six days, then He positioned Himself on the Throne - the Raḥmān, so ask about Him someone who knows. [59] And when it is said to them, "Prostrate to the Raḥmān (the Most Merciful)," they say "What is Raḥmān? Shall we prostrate to that to which you direct us?" And it increases nothing in them except aversion. [60]

Glorious is the One who made stellar formations in the sky and placed therein a lamp (sun) and a bright moon. [61] And He is the One who made the day and the night following each other, for the one who wishes to be mindful or wishes to show gratitude. [62]

Commentary

Relationship between causes and effects and their being subject to Allah's will

The above verses describe complete and total omnipotence of Allah Ta'ālā and His bounties and favors showered on human kind. This also proves Oneness of Allah and that no one can share His right of worship.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ (Have you not turned your vision to your Lord, how He prolonged the shadow? - 25:45). Sunlight and shade are such blessings of God that without them it would not have been possible for mankind to survive and carry on its day to day functions. If there is sunlight all the time, it will create problems not only for humans but for all living things. On the other hand, if there is shade all the time, then also neither man nor other living creatures can survive. Allah Ta'ālā has created these two blessings by His limitless power and made them

beneficial for the mankind. At the same time Allah Ta'ālā, through His infinite wisdom, has tied up all created things with specific causes in the sense that these things come into existence only when such causes are available, and if they are absent, these things do not exist. Similarly, if the causes are strong and available in abundance, the existence of their effects is also strong and abundant, and vice versa. Creation of crops and grass is dependent upon availability of land, water and air. Similarly, light is dependent on availability of the sun and the moon. Rain is dependent on clouds and air. Then there is such a strong bond between these causes and effects that it binds them together in such a way that there has not been the slightest deviation in the working of things even after the passage of centuries. For instance look at the solar system. This system has been working for centuries, yet there has not been the minutest change or deviation in its working, nor has there been a split of a second's difference in the movements of the entire system. Neither there is any change in the movements of the sun and the moon nor do they require any overhauling or repair work. They are moving along their orbits since the origin of the universe at a defined speed. One can calculate their movements with precision and predict their positions in advance for centuries.

This marvelous system of causes and effects was, in fact, a masterpiece of Allah's creation and a solid proof of His boundless power and infinite wisdom, but it was this firmness of the system which ultimately made people neglectful of Allah's power. When they perceived that all the 'effects' in this universe are linked with some visible causes, they confined their eyes to these visible causes only and started believing them to be the original creator of all these events. The real power of the Creator which was the original cause of all causes remained hidden behind the covers of visible causes only. The prophets are sent and the divine books are revealed to remind human beings that they must rise above this shortsightedness, and see behind the cover of these apparent causes and the omnipotence of their creator who is in fact running and controlling the whole system. This is the only way to discover the real truth about this universe. The verses under consideration are meant to point out to this reality.

In the verse **أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ** (Have you not turned your vision to

your Lord, how He prolonged the shadow? - 25:45). People are reminded of the perfect solar system and the benefits people draw from it. It is a common experience to see the sun rising from the east when the shades are long. Then with the passage of time they are shortened and at noon become the shortest. Then again as the sun moves toward west the shades start lengthening and before the sunsets become the longest. In this whole process the entire humanity draws unlimited benefits from sunlight and its shades, and clearly realizes that there are the effects of the movements of the sun between East and West, but little attention is paid to the question as to who has created this sun and who has bound it to a well - planned system. Answer to this question cannot be found by one's eyes, but it can be perceived by the insight of heart and mind.

If He so willed, Allah would have made sunlight and shades stationary so that where there was sunlight it would have stayed as such, and where there was shade it would have remained such for ever. Just think of the problems it would have brought about. But in His Wisdom He has not done so and instead created things which are beneficial and useful for humanity. The next verse وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَجَعَلَهُ سَاكِنًا (and if He so willed, He would have made it stand still - 45) means exactly that.

In order to explain the phenomenon of lengthening and shortening of shades, it is stated in the verse قَبَضْنَاهُ إِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا يَسِيرًا (45) that is "We pulled it toward Us in a gradual manner." It is well known that Allah Ta'ālā is beyond the purview of body or direction and hence there is no question of the shade being pulled toward Him. What it means is that shortening of the shades takes place by His Supreme Power.

To work during day time and rest at night is based on great Wisdom

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا وَالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا وَجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُورًا

And He is the One who has made the night an apparel for you, and the sleep a means of rest and has made the day a means of revival. [47]

The night is referred as the apparel in this verse to describe that it covers up everything like a natural sheet as does the dress to human body. The word سُبَاتًا (*subāta*) is derived from سَبَتَ (*sabt*) which means to cut out. سَبَات is that thing which cuts out some other thing.

Allah Ta'ālā has made the sleep to shed away the exhaustion and fatigue one develops after the day long work. In sleep one is cut off with stress and strain of mind and body while they are rested. Hence the word سُبَات is generally translated as rest, relaxation or tranquility. So the sense of the verse is that Allah Ta'ālā has created the night as a covering to everything then imposed sleep on men and all living things, so that they rest and relax.

Here one needs to ponder over a few things. Everyone knows that sleep is a blessing and a source of relaxation. But it is human nature to sleep in darkness. It is very difficult to sleep in day light, and even if one goes off to sleep, one is awakened quickly. Conforming to human needs and nature Allah Ta'ālā has made nights dark and cool, so that people can sleep and relax. Hence, night by itself is a blessing and sleep is another blessing. The third blessing is that the entire humanity and animals sleep at night instinctively. If the sleeping time of different people were different from one another, it would have created a number of problems. In such a situation some would have slept at one time and the others at some other, creating problems for one another, because when people are awake, they move about for various works and this movement would have created noise to the annoyance and disturbance for those who were sleeping. Apart from this, people are dependent on each other in many ways and different times of their sleeping would have deprived them of helping each other in their works because working time of one would have been the time of rest for the other.

If human beings would have resorted to a social contract for uniting the times of rest and work for the whole world, it was not, at the first place, an easy task to make billions of people agree on a single resolution, then the implementation of such a contract would have required a lot of formal departments, and still there would have been room for violation of such a contract through corrupt means, as is observed in the contemporary forums. All such problems have been overcome by the creation of night and sleep by Allah Ta'ālā which are greatly beneficial and necessary for human and other living beings. Allah Ta'ālā has instilled in humans such an urge to sleep at night that one can keep awake only with great difficulty and effort. فتبارك الله أحسن الخالقين

Similarly in وَجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُورًا (and has made the day a means of revival -

25:47), the day is described as revival, because its opposite, that is sleep, is like death when one loses all his senses. Here again, to keep awake and attend to one's needs during the day time is made mandatory in human beings. If this was not so, some people would have attended to their work while others slept, and this would have caused all sorts of problems.

As in the case of sleep, Allah Ta'ālā has bestowed a great blessing on human beings by creating its need at night. He has also made it part of human nature to keep awake and attend to work during day time, so that people should look after each other's needs. He has also fixed certain timings for certain desires and needs common in all human beings. For instance, all people feel hungry in the mornings and evenings and want to eat. So the eating times of all humans are common which is again a great blessing from Allah Ta'ālā .

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا (And We have sent down purifying water from the heavens - 25:48). In Arabic طَهُورٌ (*Tahūr*) means something which is pure by itself and which also purifies other things. Allah Ta'ālā has given this quality to water that it is clean by itself and possesses the property to cleanse other things also. The water we use comes down from the clouds in the form of rain, hail or snow. Then some of it flows on the surface of the earth and the rest seeps down into the ground. Under the ground there is a natural drainage system which takes the under ground water to every nook of the earth and then it reappears on the surface in the form of springs, fountains etc. Sometimes the underground water is drawn out by digging wells to reach it. All these waters i.e. that which falls in the form of rain, or that which flows on the surface of earth in the form of rivers, streams or canals, or that which is preserved underground are pure in Shari'ah and have inherent property of cleaning other things. There is consensus of opinion in *ummah* on this matter and it is the express purport of the Holy Qur'ān and Sunnah.

When the water is in large quantity as in the case of a pond, pool or a canal, it remains pure even if something filthy has fallen in it. On this point also there is a general consensus, unless the effect of filth is perceptible and the colour, taste and smell of water changes. However, if the quantity of water is small and some filth drops in it, then there is a difference of opinion among the jurists (مجتهدین) on the nature and quantity of filth as well as the quantity of water in which the filth falls.

Details on this issue are described by Maẓharī and Qurṭubī in their commentaries and are also available in the books on Fiqh.

وَنُسْقِيهِ، مِمَّا خَلَقْنَا أَنْعَامًا وَأَنَاسِيَّ كَثِيرًا (And give drink to the many cattle and humans We have created - 25:49). The word أَنَاسِيَّ is the plural of إِنْسِيَّ and some linguistics have taken it as a plural of إِنْسَان (both the words mean 'human'). This verse has described that the rain is a source of irrigation for land, while it serves as a drink for 'many cattle and humans'. The point worth consideration here is why the word 'many' is used which indicates that some human beings do not benefit from it. This question may be answered by saying that the reference here is to the cattle and human beings living in jungles and deserts who directly use the water of rain. As for the urban people, they normally use the water of wells and canals etc.

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَاهُ بَيْنَهُمْ (And We have distributed it (the water) among them - 25:50). The verse says that We keep rotating the rainfall, that is, it sometimes falls in one locality and sometimes in another. Then sometimes a locality receives in one year more rain and in subsequent years less. Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās says that the presumption of some people that the quantity of rains varies from year to year is not really correct. In fact the aggregate amount of water sent down to the world (at macro-level) is equal every year. However, according to Allah's will, its allocation for different territories may change from year to year. Sometimes the quantity of water is curtailed for a specific habitation as a punishment and warning for it, and sometimes the quantity of rain is increased for a particular population, again as a punishment for their misdeeds. Thus the water that was a blessing in its origin turns into a torment for the people who are ungrateful and disobedient.

Jihād with Qur’ān (its propagation) is great Jihād

وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا (And strive against them with it (the Qur’ān) a great striving - 25:52). This is a Makkan verse when the injunction for Jihād, in the sense of fighting the infidels, had not been revealed. What is ordained in this verse is that you spread the message of Qur’ān among the people at large. Propagation of Qur’ānic message among people and to make them understand it is great Jihād whether it is by mouth, pen or any other means,

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ ۖ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا

وَجَعَلْنَا مَاجْرًا مَّحْجُورًا

And He is the One who joined the two seas - this is sweat, very sweat and this is bitter, very bitter - and made between them a buffer and a barrier, prohibited (to cross) - 25:53.

The word مَرَج (maraja) means to let off or allow to roam freely and hence pasture is called مَرَج (maraj) that is where animals can graze and roam about. عَذْب (‘adhb) is sweet water, while فُرَات means delicious and pleasant; and مِلْح (milh) means salty and أُجَاج means bitter.

Allah Ta‘ālā in His own Wisdom has created two types of waters. One is enormous in size called oceans and cover up about two third of the global space while the rest of the one third space is made up of land mass on which people live. The water of the oceans and seas is extremely brackish, bitter and of a bad taste. On the other hand the water found on land in different forms is potable, pleasant and tasty. This water is just right for the needs of mankind and animals alike who drink it and use it for cleaning. If the water of the seas and oceans were not brackish, it would have decayed very quickly leaving behind a pungent and foul odor making the life unbearable for humans and animals on land. Moreover, the creatures living in ocean and sea water, and number manifold than those living on land could not have survived because when they die, they perish in the brackish water. If they were to die in sweet water their decomposition would have contaminated the water making the survival of the marine life impossible and its stink would have been unbearable for the life on land. Then the garbage of the land is generally dumped in the sea where it is decomposed (except for a few modern age items which need special treatment). Therefore, brackish water of the oceans and seas is a great blessing of Allah Ta‘ālā for all creatures, whether living in the sea or on the land. Without the presence of brackish water mass, there would have been no marine or land life.

In this verse it is elucidated that it is a great blessing and grace of Allah Ta‘ālā to have provided two types of waters in accordance with the needs of mankind. Then it is a perfect demonstration of His complete power that when a river of sweet water falls into the sea, the two waters (the sweet and the brackish) do not mingle immediately where they meet, but for miles they remain separated from each other, despite the fact that there is no physical curtain between them. This is yet another example of

His omnipotence.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ بَشَرًا فَجَعَلَهُ نَسَبًا وَصِهْرًا (And He is the One who created man from water then made of him kinship of blood and kinship of in-laws. 25:54) *nasab*, translated above as 'kinship of blood') is that relationship which emanates from either parent, and *ṣihr*, translated above as 'kinship of in-laws') is that kinship which is drawn from the wife's side and is called in - laws. All these relations and bonds are Allah's graces given to mankind for a pleasant and tranquil life. If these relations are taken away from someone's life it will be impossible for him to live by himself.

قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا

Say, "I do not demand from you any fee, except that whoever so wills, should adopt a way to his Lord - 25:57.

Allah Ta'ālā advised the Holy Prophet ﷺ to say that he has no personal interest in inviting to accept and follow Allah's message in order to be profitable in this world and the Hereafter. He does not seek any reward from them for his efforts. His reward is only that they turn towards Allah. It is but obvious that if someone moves to the righteous path it is he who will be the gainer. As for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it was his love for the people that he was striving, and has considered the gain of the people as his own. It is just like an old father asks his children to eat and drink and be merry, and declares to them that their eating and drinking is a reward for himself. It is also possible that the correct attitude of the people is taken as a reward for the Holy Prophet ﷺ because he will also be rewarded if the people take up to right path. Some authentic traditions say that if someone asks people to take up the righteous path and they oblige, then not only those who have acted righteously will be rewarded for the good acts, but also the one who has persuaded them to follow the righteous path. (Maẓharī)

فَسْأَلْ بِهِ خَيْرًا (So ask about Him someone who knows - 25:59). In this verse it is described that the creation of the earth and the skies, and then to place Himself on 'Arsh in consonance to His exalted position are all acts of Allah Ta'ālā. If someone wants its confirmation, he should find out from those who know the truth. Here the allusion for knowledge is toward Allah Ta'ālā or Jibra'īl عليه السلام. It is also possible that the reference is toward

the scholars of the previous Books wherein the truth was also mentioned.
(Mazharī)

قَالُوا وَمَا الرَّحْمَنُ (60) The word رَحْمَن (Raḥmān, translated as All-Merciful) is an Arabic word and all Arabs knew its meaning, but they did not use it for Allah Ta'ālā. Hence they enquired who and what is Raḥmān (رَحْمَن).

تَبَرَّكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا مُنِيرًا ﴿٦١﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ خِلْفَةً لِّمَنۢ أَرَادَ أَن يَذَّكَّرَ أَوْ أَرَادَ شُكُورًا ﴿٦٢﴾

Glorious is the One who made stellar formations in the sky and placed therein a lamp (sun) and a bright moon. [61] And He is the One who made the day and the night following each other, for the one who wishes to be mindful or wishes to show gratitude. [62] - 25:61,62.

In these two verses it is explained that Allah Ta'ālā has created the sun, the moon and stars which bring about the day and night (on earth) alternately, so that those who give thought to things around them should see manifestation of His omnipotence and proof His Oneness; and the thanks-givers should have occasion for thanks-giving. Therefore, whosoever does not pay heed to manifestation of His creation and does not offer Him his gratitude lives a useless life, and he has lost his capital as well (اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنَا مِنَ الذَّاكِرِينَ الشَّاكِرِينَ).

Ibn al-'Arabi says that he has heard from the Great Martyr (شهيد اكبر) that the one who has attained the age of sixty years and has spent half of his life of thirty years in sleeping, and one sixth of the time of i.e. ten years in taking rest during the day time, is in a great loss. So, he has spent only twenty years of his life in working.

After pointing out about the stars, the planets and the astronomical features, the Qur'an has made it clear that the repeated reference of these things in the Qur'an is for the purpose that people contemplate over their creation, movements and resulting phenomenon in order to help visualize and understand the One who creates and controls them, and then pay homage and thanks to Allah Ta'ālā.

Cosmological theories and the Qur'an

As regards the questions as to what is the reality of the stellar formations and whether the stars are fixed in the sky or are floating in

the space, no basic human need is dependent on answering these questions, neither in this world, nor in the Hereafter. Moreover, there are many issues of this type which could not be resolved finally, despite all the painstaking efforts undertaken by many researchers. Therefore, it is not a necessary service to the Qur'ān to indulge in such controversies beyond the aforesaid purpose of the Holy Qur'ān, that is, to ponder on these wonders as signs of the divine omnipotence and to pay homage to Him for their creation. The modern scientists have, no doubt, acquired wonderful achievements in inventing satellites and space-crafts, in travelling to the moon and bringing dust and stones from there, but it is a pity that the realistic approach about the Creator of this universe, suggested by the Holy Qur'ān, was not only neglected by them, but being proud of these discoveries, they became more distant from it and the people became more confused about the Qur'ānic expressions. There are some people who take these discoveries as against the Qur'ānic expressions and therefore deny the facts proved by real observations, and there are others who try to twist the Qur'ānic expressions to suit the modern theories. It is, therefore, deemed necessary to clarify the correct situation about these issues in some detail. We had already promised in our commentary to Sūrah Al-Ḥijr that we would discuss these issues in detail under Sūrah Al-Furqān. Now, here is that discussion:

Old and modern theories about the location of the planets and the Qur'ānic expressions

Let us take the question about the location of the stars. The verse 61 above says, جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا (made the stellar formations in the sky). Here the words 'in the sky' apparently indicate that the planets are located in the sky. Similarly the words in a verse of Sūrah Nūḥ are as follows:

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ
سِرَاجًا

Did you not realize how Allah has created seven skies, one over the other, and has made moon in them a light. (71:15,16)

Here again the phrase فِيهِنَّ "in them" refers to skies which apparently indicates that moon is placed in the sky. But these expressions should not be taken as an absolute declaration that moon and other planets are located and fixed physically in the sky. The reason is that the Arabic word

"سَّمَاء" (*samā'*, translated as "sky" or "heavens") is used for two different meanings. It is sometime used for the great mass of the sky, and sometimes for every thing which is above us in the direction of the sky, including the atmosphere between earth and sky and the space. The Holy Qur'ān has used this word for both these meanings in different verses. When it speaks of the sky as a huge mass having gates guarded by angels which are opened at particular times, it takes the word for the first meaning. But when it describes the rain coming down from the sky, it takes the word 'sky' for the second sense. For example the Holy Qur'ān says,

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا

And We have sent down purifying water from the heavens.
(25:48)

Obviously the word سَّمَاء (*samā'*, translated as sky or heavens) in this verse is used in the second sense, firstly because the common observation (even in the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ) has proved that the rain comes from the clouds and not from the sky, and secondly because the Holy Qur'ān itself has mentioned at different places in express terms that the rain comes from the clouds. For example, the following two verses are self-speaking on this point:

ءَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْزِلُونَ

Have you sent it (the rain) down from the clouds or are We who sends it down. (56:69)

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا

And We sent down abundant water from clouds full of rain.
(78:14)

In the light of these verses, the word سَّمَاء (sky/heavens) used in verse 25:48 above is obviously used for the atmosphere above us.

Now, when the Qur'ān has itself used the word 'sky' in both senses, the verses describing the stars and planets 'in the sky' have equal possibility of either of these two senses. They can be taken to mean that the planets are placed in the mass of the sky, and they can equally be taken to mean that they are in the space. In the presence of these two possibilities no absolute declaration about this issue can be attributed to

the Holy Qur'an. Whatever situation about this issue is proved by observation or by research will not be against any express declaration of the Qur'an.

Realities of the universe and Qur'an

It is vital that we clear our thinking on the subject matter of the Holy Qur'an. It should be clearly understood that Qur'an is not a book of philosophy or astronomy. It does not deal with the subject of realities of the universe or the form, positioning and movements of its components e.g. stars, planets etc. But at the same time it does mention repeatedly about things on the earth and in the sky and in between them, and invites to ponder over them to set one's beliefs right. On going through all such verses one can make out clearly that the idea behind them is to set right the beliefs of the people or to help them draw benefits for their religious or mundane needs. For instance, Qur'an has repeatedly mentioned about the earth and sky the stars and planets and their movements and the effects of these movements for man to ponder over in order to comprehend and understand that this spectacular phenomenon has not come into being on its own but there is someone who has created all that, and that someone is Almighty Allah Ta'ālā. For the ordinary man it is not necessary to acquire knowledge of astronomy and related sciences but instead it is sufficient for him to observe the alternation of day and night, their shortening and lengthening of duration, the change in the tilt of sun bringing different seasons, the rising and waning of the moon, the eclipses of the moon and the sun, which every individual see happening. A common man sees them happening with perfect precision and knows that it is going on without the slightest alteration for centuries. Then he can draw the conclusion that there is some Power who has created it, and is running and holding it. That "someone" or that "Power" is none else but Allah Ta'ālā. To arrive at this conclusion one neither has to acquire any special philosophical knowledge or any research data nor the Qur'an has asked to do so. All that Qur'an has asked in this regard is to pay attention to these phenomena which one can see by simple observation. Also the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his companions did not make any arrangement to study astronomical or cosmic theories or to collect data and information on the shape and form of celestial bodies. Had these verses on astronomical and cosmic realities been conveying the message to strive to find out such

realities, then the Holy Prophet ﷺ would have definitely made an effort in this direction, especially in a situation when facilities were available in his time for acquiring such knowledge. People in Egypt, Syria, India and China had already worked on these subjects and had acquired some knowledge. Five hundred years before Christ (B.C) Pythagorean theory was propounded and established, and later in 139 A.D. Ptolemy also propounded his well known theory. But the most revered person on whom these verses were revealed and the companions who learned them directly from him never made any attempt in that direction. Therefore it is abundantly clear that the Qur'anic verses inviting people to ponder over the cosmological signs did never intend that the space travel and the efforts to conquer the moon and other planets are the basic objectives of the Qur'an, as is suggested by some contemporary modernists under the influence of the West and its discoveries.

The fact of the matter is that the Holy Qur'an neither invites people's attention towards any old or new philosophical thesis or scientific research nor does it deal with them, nor does it reject them. The plain and simple manner in which the Holy Qur'an deals with the subjects concerning universe and His creation is to confine their mention only to the extent they are related to the man's religious or worldly needs, and what man can comprehend and learn easily. On the other hand Qur'an does not involve itself in complicated philosophical discussions and researches which are beyond the comprehension of common man and which sometimes create more confusion in the minds of people for their ever changing nature because of the unending discoveries and inventions being made with the passage of time. In effect Qur'an guides the humanity toward its ultimate goal which is to seek and follow the righteous path to comply with the Will of Allah Ta'ālā in order to win over His grace in the everlasting abode in the Hereafter. It is neither required nor is it possible for every one to indulge in the discussion of the realities of the universe for the theories of one period become obsolete in the next period by the new discoveries and inventions. Hence no theory or thesis could be regarded as final. The Holy Qur'an however does make allusions at certain places toward some realities covering subjects like astronomy, space, atmosphere, meteorology, oceanography, geology etc. but to the extent it is needed for human life here or in the Hereafter. Similarly, the

Qur'an makes references about His creatures on earth related with botany, zoology, petrology and social sciences including trade, agriculture, industry etc., but again to the extent it is required to guide the man to fulfill his religious and worldly duties. Qur'an does not drag mankind toward unnecessary and futile discussions for making things complicated. However, it is only at some places in the Holy Qur'an that it mentions a particular issue of this nature expressly or gives a hint towards it.

Criteria of acceptance or rejection of scientific and philosophical theories in the commentary of the Holy Qur'an

The classical and modern religious scholars are unanimous on the point that if a statement is lucid and unambiguous in the Qur'an but it contradicts with any old or new theory, it is not permissible to try to twist the Qur'anic version to try to bring it in line with the modern theories. In such a situation the related theory would be regarded as based on some misconception. However, in the matters in which Qur'an does not give any express statement and where more than one interpretations are possible from the wordings of the Qur'an, then in that situation the interpretation closer to observations and evidence would be regarded as correct. For instance, we can take the case of this very verse جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا (Stellar formations in the sky - 25:61) where it is not specified whether the stars are placed in the space or stuck in the sky. Now in the present time when it is proved by observations that stars are orbiting in the space and are not stuck in the sky, then the Pythagorean theory has been proved correct, because according to the express statements of the Qur'an and *aḥādīth*, sky has gates guarded by the angels and no one can enter into it. (Had the planets been fixed in the sky, the modern researchers would have not been able to reach them). Based on this observation the verses referring to the stars 'in the sky' will be construed to mean that these stars are in the space. And this will not be tantamount to twisting the Qur'anic statement, but only the adoption of one of the two possible interpretations. However, if it is claimed that the skies do not exist or that they can be pierced through by the rockets, then it will be in contradiction to Qur'anic wordings and cannot be accepted because Qur'an has clearly stated in several verses that sky is such an enclosure where there are gates guarded by the angles, and every one cannot enter there.

Similarly, the verse كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ (Each floating in an orbit)

ascertains the floating of stars in their orbits. Hence, Ptolemaic theory (propounded in 139 A.D) suggesting that the stars are embedded in the body of the sky and have no movement of their own, rather they move with the movement of the sky, is no more valid after the Qur'ānic declaration that stars are orbiting.

Some earlier commentators who believed in the Ptolemaic theory which was in conflict with the Qur'ānic version on astronomy had tried to stretch and twist the meanings of the Quranic words to bring it in line with the Ptolemaic theory. Similarly, in present and recent times when some authors presume that some Qur'ānic verses are at variance with some astronomical theories, they attempt to harmonize them with modern theories by twisting their meanings. Both these attitudes are incorrect and against the classical methodology of the righteous elders. It is, however, a fact that no theory from those advanced by astronomers is in contradiction to the Qur'ān, except the theory of denial of the skies.

Sayyid Maḥmūd Ālūsī Baghdadi who is the greatest commentator and scholar of recent time because of his vast knowledge and understanding of not only the Qur'ān and Sunnah but also of philosophy and astronomical sciences has condensed the work of all classical commentators in his famous and widely acclaimed commentary - Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī. He has adopted the same principle, which is described above. His grandson Allāmah Sayyid Maḥmūd Shukrī Ālūsī has written a book on the subject in which he has endorsed modern astronomical theories in the light of Qur'ānic declarations without twisting their meanings. The relevant passage from his book is quoted below:

رأيت كثيرا من قواعدها لا يعارض النصوص الواردة في الكتاب والسنة، على أنها لو خالفت شيئا من ذلك لم يلتفت إليها ولم نؤول النصوص لاجلها، والتأويل فيها ليس من مذاهب السلف الحرية بالقبول، بل لابد أن نقول أن المخالف لها مشتمل على خلل فيه، فإن العقل الصريح لا يخالف النقل الصحيح، بل كل منهما يصدق الآخر ويؤيده (مادل عليه القرآن)

"I have checked many principles of the modern astronomy. They are not in conflict with the Qur'ānic text or Sunnah. But in case they differ with Qur'ān and Sunnah then we shall discard them and would not twist the (meaning of) Qur'ān and Sunnah because such twisting would be against the practice of the

elders. In such situations we would argue that any theory which is in conflict with the Qur'ān or Sunnah is imperfect, because the sound reason can never be against an authentic text (of Qur'ān or Sunnah) rather they are complimentary to each other."

In brief it can be said that the subject of stars and planets, their form and movements and related astronomical theories have been discussed and researched for a long time, even before the birth of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام in various countries like Egypt, Syria, India, China and Greece. Among them Pythagoras and Ptolemy are still well known.

Obviously, astronomy is not a new branch of knowledge. It has been the subject of human research since thousands of years. Egypt, Syria, India and China were the centres of astronomical research in the ancient ages. Pythagoras, the famous astronomer, used to teach astronomy in Italy five hundred years before Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام. Then, in 140 BC, Ptolemy ruled the field who developed a cosmological theory that was in total contradiction the theory of Pythagoras, but it found currency with the cooperation of the government, so much so that the theory of Pythagoras was pushed back to a situation where it was ignored almost totally. When the Greek sciences were translated into Arabic, it was the theory of Ptolemy that rules the field, and was rendered into Arabic and became popular in Arabic books. Many commentators of the Qur'an discussed the subject in the light of Ptolemaic theory.

It was in the fifteenth century A.D. (corresponding to the eleventh century A.H.) that the European scholars started their research on the subject. The pioneering work in the field was done by Copernicus, followed by Keiler of Germany and Galileo of Italy. All these astronomers falsified the theory of Ptolemy and endorsed the theory of Pythagoras. In eighteenth century A.D. the discoveries of Issac Newton further confirmed the theory of Pythagoras. He propounded the theory of gravity and proved through experiments that all the planets, including earth, have gravity which makes things fall onto them from above, but the range of gravity varies from planet to planet. If something is able to cross the range of gravity of the earth, it will never fall to the ground.

This theory was proved by empirical evidence when Russian and American scientists, who benefitted from some researches of Al-Bairuni,

the well-known Muslim scientist, succeeded in sending rockets and satellites to the space which, after breaking the gravity range of the earth, started rotating around their orbit. This success prompted the scientists to travel to the planets through space, and ultimately some of them reached the moon, a fact which was admitted by all the experts and was not challenged, even by their opponents. It is from that time that the efforts to reach other planets and to undertake other missions to the space are going on upto the date.

It is interesting to note that John Glenn, the first American astronaut had written article after his successful return from the space in which he had admitted not only the existence of God, but also His omnipotence that controls the whole universe. He had also admitted that all our scientific accomplishments are almost worthless as compared to the natural process going on in the space which cannot be weighed by any type of measures. He had concluded the article with the admission that everything in this universe cannot be perceived or felt by human senses. There are many religious realities which are beyond the access of our senses, but we certainly know, through their visible effects, that they exist, and this leads us to believe that this universe is controlled by an omnipotent power. This article was published in those days in many periodicals, including Readers Digest.

This article shows that the end-result of all these effects was to admit that the mysteries of the universe are not still discovered and that all these planets are controlled by a Supreme, but incorporeal Power. And this is the reality that was declared by the prophets of Allah at the very first step, and this is the very conclusion for which the Holy Qur'an has invited us to reflect on the creation of sky, earth, stars and planets etc.

Another point worth consideration is that these modern discoveries that cost trillions of dollars, despite their marvelous and admirable courage have not been able to solve the burning problems of humanity suffering from hunger, disease and unrest. The dust and stones brought from the moon at such a huge cost were of little benefit to those who face death on daily basis because of hunger or those who do not have clothes to wear or a home to live. The real benefit of such discoveries, that is, to believe in Allah and be grateful to Him, did not need such extra-ordinary efforts. These benefits can be drawn even by a rustic through simple

observations of these objects, and this is exactly what the Holy Qur'an has stressed upon.

The gist of the matter is that the study of cosmology for making it a source of guidance towards Allah's omnipotence, His all-encompassing wisdom and His being the sole Creator and having no partner is the objective of the Qur'an towards which the Holy Book has invited us in many places. Secondly, study of these sciences to the extent that they are used for solving the real problems of life is also included in Qur'anic objectives, but with the difference that the worldly affairs are not taken to be the be-all and the end-all one's activities, but the worldly life is held to be a transitory stage to be looked after to the extent of real needs. The third objective for the study of cosmology which aims at solving merely theoretical issues having no nexus with the first two objectives is a futile exercise not encouraged by the Qur'an.

It is, therefore, clear that all the modern researches and discoveries cannot be held to be the exact objective of the Qur'an, as suggested by modern scholars. Similarly, these discoveries cannot be held to be repugnant to the Holy Qur'an, as observed by some conservative scholars. The fact is that these issues are not the subject matter of the Qur'an which is silent about them. If a reality is proved by experiments or observations, it cannot be taken as contradictory to the Qur'an, and that which is not yet proved no effort should be made to impose it on the Qur'an through fanciful interpretations.

Tbād-ur-Rahmān

عِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ

Verses 63 - 77

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ
الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا
﴿٦٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا
كَانَ غَرَامًا ﴿٦٥﴾ إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا

أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴿٦٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
 لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا
 بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ ۚ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ أَثَامًا ﴿٦٨﴾ يُضْعَفُ لَهُ
 الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ وَيَخْلُدُ فِيهِ مُهَانًا ﴿٦٩﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ
 وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ ۖ وَكَانَ
 اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٧٠﴾ وَمَنْ تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَإِنَّهُ يَتُوبُ إِلَى
 اللَّهِ مَتَابًا ﴿٧١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ ۚ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللُّغُورِ
 كَرَامًا ﴿٧٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّوا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا
 وَعُمُيَانًا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّتِنَا
 قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾ أُولَئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ بِمَا
 صَبَرُوا وَيُلْقَوْنَ فِيهَا تَحِيَّةً وَسَلَامًا ﴿٧٥﴾ خُلِدِينَ فِيهَا ۖ حَسَنَتْ
 مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا ﴿٧٦﴾ قُلْ مَا يَعْبُؤُا بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ ۚ فَقَدْ
 كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا ﴿٧٧﴾

And the slaves of the Raḥmān are those who walk on the earth humbly and when the ignorant people speak to them, they reply peacefully, [63] and those who pass the night prostrating and standing before their Lord, [64] and those who say, "Our Lord, avert from us the punishment of Jahannam; indeed, its punishment is a persisting affliction. [65] Indeed, evil it is as an abode and a place to dwell in [66] - and those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor miserly, and it (i.e. their spending) is moderate in between (the two extremes) [67] - and those who do not invoke any other god alongwith Allah, and do not kill a person whom Allah has given sanctity, except rightfully, nor do they fornicate; and whoever does it, shall face the recompense of his sin, [68] the punishment will be doubled for him and he will remain there disdained, for

ever, [69] except the one who repents and believes and does good deeds, then Allah will change the bad deeds of such people into good ones, and Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [70] And whoever repents and does righteous deeds turns to Allah truly [71] - and those who do not witness falsehood, and when they pass by the absurd things, Pass by with dignity [72] and those who, when they are reminded of the verses of their Lord, do not fall at them as deaf and blind ones [73] - and those who say, "Our Lord, Give us, from our spouses and our children, coolness of eyes and make us heads of the God-fearing. [74] Such people will be rewarded with the high place - because they observed patience - and will be received therein with prayers of their eternal life and peace, [75] living in it (the Paradise) for ever. It is best as an abode and as a place to dwell in. [76]

Say (O Prophet), "My Lord will never care about you, if you will not invoke Him. Now since you belied (the truth), the punishment will be inseparable from you. [77]

Commentary

Upto this point Sūrah Al-Furqān has mostly discussed the proofs of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and answered various objections raised in this regard by disbelievers and pagans. While dealing with this subject Allah's wrath and punishment on those who deny His injunctions was also mentioned. Now, at the end of the Sūrah it refers to those special servants of His who firmly believe in the Holy Prophet's ﷺ prophethood and their beliefs, deeds and dealings are all in conformity with the will of Allah and His messenger and who follow the Sharī'ah.

The Holy Qur'ān has awarded the title of 'Ibād-ur-Raḥmān to such special servants of Allah Ta'ālā, which is indeed the highest honour. Although all creatures are governed by His will compulsorily, but here the voluntary worship by free will is alluded. That is to surrender completely before Allah and to make all deeds and desires conforming to His pleasure with one's own choice. In these last verses of the Sūrah the special servants of Allah are described whom He has Himself called as His servants to grant them unique honour. Their traits and characteristics are mentioned in the last verses until the end of the Sūrah. In between this

description repentance from infidelity and sins and its effects are also referred to.

By calling these pious persons as His own slaves, Allah Ta'ala has given to them a great title of honour. But by selecting the name Rahman (the All-Merciful) for Himself, out of all His Beautiful Names and attributes, the hint is perhaps given to the fact that these pious people, being the slaves of the All-Merciful, should reflect and demonstrate the quality of mercifulness through their general behavior.

Special traits of Allah Ta'ālā's favoured servants

In the verses under review thirteen traits and habits of the special and favoured servants of Allah Ta'ālā are mentioned. Included among them are correct beliefs, righteous acts, both physical and financial, to obey the command of Allah and His messenger, social dealings with other persons, Allah's fear in His worship, refraining from all sorts of sins and carrying along wife and children on the righteous path with oneself.

The first characteristic of such people is that they are "slaves" (عِبَاد) which is the plural of the word عَبْد (slave). Here it means the slave who is the property of his Master. All his deeds and prerogatives together with his very life are dedicated to follow the command and will of the Master.

Only such a person can claim to be Allah's slave whose views and beliefs, thinking and desires, and deeds and actions are totally in line with the command and pleasure of his Rab (Master) and who keeps himself alert to carry out each and every command as soon as he is required to.

The second characteristic

يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا (25:63) that is "they walk on the earth humbly". Here the word هَوْن (hawn) is used in the sense of humbleness, modesty and decorum - that is one does not walk with pride or arrogance. It does not mean that one should walk very slowly, because it is against Sunnah if it is without any need. According to the description given in the books of his biography, the Holy Prophet ﷺ used not to walk slowly. Instead his walk was on quicker side. It is recorded in a Ḥadīth لَهُ كَانَمَا الْأَرْضُ تَطْوِي لَهُ that is "He ﷺ used to walk in a manner as if ground was shrinking for him". (Ibn Kathīr) It is for this reason that the righteous elders have described the slow walk, like that of a sick person, as a symbol of arrogance, a sham

habit, and something unwanted (مكروه). Sayyidnā ‘Umar ؓ once saw a young man walking very slowly. He ؓ asked him "Are you sick". He replied "No". Then Sayyidnā ‘Umar ؓ raised his stick on him and commanded "Always walk robustly". (Ibn Kathīr)

Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى has said while explaining this verse يَمْشُونَ (25:63) that the organs of sincere believers are always humble before Allah, so much so that the one who is not familiar with them feels that they are sick or disabled, while they are fit and healthy. As a matter of fact it is the awe of God which has overtaken them and which has not struck the others. It is the fright of Hereafter which has refrained them from unnecessary mundane practices. Those who do not have faith in God and keep themselves engrossed in worldly affairs suffer only with disappointment (because they do not get the desired result in this world, and lose their share in the Hereafter as well). And those who regard sustenance as the only reward from Allah Ta‘ālā and neglect practising morality have indeed very little understanding and for them there is great punishment. (Ibn Kathīr)

The third characteristic:

وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا (And when the ignorant people speak to them, they reply peacefully - 25:63): It should be kept in mind that the word "ignorant" in this verse refers to a person who acts like an ignorant person, notwithstanding that he might be a knowledgeable person. Also, the word سَلَام (peace) is not used here in its customary sense of greeting, but for any word causing peace. What is meant here is that in response to ignorance they keep composed and answer with calmness so that others are not offended and they do not commit a sin. The same explanation is put forward by Sayyidnā Mujāhid and Muqātil etc. The intended meaning is that they do not avenge from those who talk to them like ignorant people.

The Fourth Characteristic

وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا (and those who pass the night prostrating and standing before their Lord, - 25:64). Special mention of night worship is made here firstly, because this time being a time of rest, requires extra effort, and secondly because it rules out the possibility of showing one's worship to others. The idea is to express that they spend their day and night in submission before Allah during the day by teaching and

spreading religious tenets and struggling in the way of Allah and at night by praying before Him. The sayings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have extolled the night prayers (تهجد). Tirmidhī has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū 'Umāmah ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Remain steadfast to your night prayers as this has been the practice of all righteous people before your time, and this will bring you closer to Allah Ta'ālā and will expiate the evils and keep you away from sins". (Maẓharī)

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has said that one who has offered two or more Rak'ats after 'Isha' prayers is also covered by the verse. (Maẓharī from Bayhaqī) and Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ is reported to have observed that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that one who has offered his 'Isha' prayer with congregation would be regarded as having worshipped half the night and the one who has offered Fajr prayer with congregation would be regarded as having offered the other half of the night in prayers. (Aḥmed and Muslim from Maẓharī)

The Fifth Characteristic

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ (and those who say, "Our Lord, avert from us the punishment of Jahannam - 25:65). It means that despite their constant prayers day and night, these favoured ones do not sit content, but are always fearful of God and keep in mind the Day of Judgement. To that end they keep alive the righteous deeds as well as supplications before Allah.

The Sixth Characteristic

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا (and those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor miserly - 25:67). That is Allah's blessed servants are neither spendthrifts nor misers but they spend moderately. The words *إِسْرَاف* (*isrāf*, i.e. extravagance) and *إِقْتَار* (*iqṭār*, i.e. miserliness) are used in the verse for the two opposite traits. *Isrāf* means to cross the limits. According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ibn Juraij رحمهم الله تعالى any spending on something sinful, however little it may be, is *isrāf*, while others say that even overspending in the rightful and allowed things which is wasteful would fall under the definition of *isrāf*. It is because any wasteful spending is by itself a sin and hence *isrāf*. Allah Ta'ālā has said إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ (Surely squanderers are brothers of Satan - 17:27). In this way the latter explanation is also covered in the explanation given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that is any spending on

some sinful thing is إسْرَافَ . (Maḥzarī)

إِقتَارَ (*iqṭār*) means to spend with miserliness. In Islamic jurisprudence it means to be tight fisted where a believer is directed to spend. In case one does not spend at all at a place where he has been directed to spend, then that is the worst situation. This explanation is also given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, Qatādah etc. (Maḥzarī) Therefore, the message of the verse is that Allah's blessed servants are neither spendthrifts nor misers but in the matter of spending they take the middle path.

There is a saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ :

مِنْ فِقْهِ الرَّجُلِ قَصْدُهُ، فِي مَعِيشَتِهِ

That is "It is the sagacity of man to adopt the middle path in spending" In another Saying quoted by Sayyidnā Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

مَا عَالَ مِنْ اقْتَصَدَ

That is "The person who sticks to the middle path and moderation in spending will never become a destitute and poor". (Imām Aḥmad - Ibn Kathīr)

The Seventh Characteristic

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ (And those who do not invoke any other god alongwith Allah - 25:68). The first six characteristics included the principles of obedience and now the characteristics of disobedience are described. Among these the very first one relates to belief, that is these blessed servants do not associate any one with Allah Ta'ālā in His worship. This point establishes that *shirk* (شِرْك) is the biggest sin of all.

The Eighth and Ninth characteristic

لَا يَقْتُلُونَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ (do not kill a person whom Allah has given sanctity - 25:68). This is the description of the major and grave sins pertaining to one's deeds. It is mentioned that Allah's blessed servants do not go even near them; neither they indulge in adultery nor do they kill innocent people. After describing the beliefs and big sins of one's deeds the verse says (25:68) وَمَنْ يُفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ أَثَامًا that is, whoever will involve himself in the above mentioned sins will get punished accordingly. Abū 'Ubaidah has described the meaning of the word أَثَامَ (*athām*) in this verse as punishment of sin. But some other commentators have said that أَثَامَ is

the name of a valley in the Hell which is full of severe and rigorous punishments, and they have quoted a few sayings in support of this contention. (Mazharī)

The next verse mentions some details of the punishment to be faced by the aforementioned sinners. In the context of these verses it is certain that this chastisement will be exclusive to those who were infidels and also indulged in adultery or homicide. In the first place the phrase **يُضَعَّفُ لَهُ الْعَذَابُ** (The punishment will be doubled for him - 69) cannot be applied on Muslim sinners because they are told both in the Qur'ān and in the Sunnah that they will get only one punishment against a sin. Any increase in the intensity of chastisement will not be in the case of believers. Doubling of chastisement will be exclusive to infidels i.e. the first chastisement will be for infidelity and in case they have also committed sins the chastisement will be doubled. Secondly, it is also mentioned about this chastisement that it will be perpetual (**وَيَخْلُدُ فِيهِ مُهَانًا** - 25:69) i.e. the punished will be placed there forever after being disgraced and condemned. On the other hand no believer will be condemned for ever in the Jahannam, no matter how big a sin he has committed. Muslims will be taken out of the Jahannam when they have completed their term there. In brief, those infidels who reject monotheism and also commit adultery and homicide will be awarded doubled chastisement which will increase in intensity and will last forever. In the next verse there is a solace for the above type of sinners in that if they seek Allah's forgiveness and act righteously, then Allah Ta'ālā is expected to change their sins into righteous deeds. In other words, once they have repented on their past sins and accepted Islam, their past sins will be taken away from their record and all that will be left in the record would be nothing but righteous deeds. It is because Allah Ta'ālā has promised that when an infidel accepts Islam, all sins he might have committed during infidelity are pardoned. Hence their previous record which was full of sins and evil deeds will be forgiven and scraped, and will be replaced with a fresh record of good and righteous deeds which they would perform after submitting to Islam. This explanation of conversion of sins into virtues is given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sa'īd Ibn Jubair and Mujāhid رحمهم الله تعالى (Mazharī).

Ibn Kathīr has given another explanation for conversion of sins into

virtues. He says that when they will remember all those sins which they had committed during the period of their infidelity, they will repent and seek Allah's forgiveness. This act of repentance will replace their sins into virtues. In support of this explanation some traditions have also been quoted.

وَمَنْ تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَإِنَّهُ يَتُوبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَتَابًا (And whoever repents and does righteous deeds he turns to Allah truly - 25:71). On the face of it, it looks repetition of the same subject as described in the preceding verse i.e. *إِلَّا مَنْ* *الْأَمَنَ*. But Qurṭubī while quoting Qaffāl has explained that this repentance is different and separate from the repentance described in the previous verse. It is because the previous verse related to deniers of monotheism and infidels who indulged in adultery and homicide and then submitted to Islam. Hence their sins were converted into virtues. But here the second verse speaks about the repentance of the Muslim sinners. This may be explained by the fact that in the previous verse the repentance was combined with the word *آمَنَ* which means that they accepted Islam whereas in the second verse the word *آمَنَ* is not there, which means that in the second verse the repentance is related to those sinners who had already converted to Islam or that they were Muslims, but by negligence indulged in adultery and homicide. Hence this verse relates to those Muslims who commit sins, but then repent on their folly sincerely and seek Allah's forgiveness and then keep themselves away from sins and evil deeds. Such repentance by the Muslims will be regarded in order and accepted. It should be understood here that the word *تَوْبَهُ* (*taubah*) is used here in conditional clause as well as in principal clause. In the conditional clause it means verbal repentance, and in the principal clause it refers to the practical repentance in the sense of correcting one's deeds. Hence it means that if someone repented on his sins and proved his sincerity by not indulging in those sins again would be regarded as on the right path towards Allah Ta'ālā. As against this the one who repented on his past sins but continued indulging in those sins, is like the one who has not repented.

In brief if a Muslim indulged in a sin by negligence and then realized that he has done wrong and repented and after that kept himself away from the sin, his repentance will be accepted by Allah Ta'ālā, and hopefully he will get the same benefit as described in the first verse i.e.

his sins will be converted into virtues.

Some rules of *taubah* (repentance) from sins had been mentioned during the traits of Allah's favoured servants. The next verses are back to the original subject.

The tenth characteristic

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ (And those who do not witness falsehood - 25:72). That is they do not participate in the meetings where lie and falsehood has currency. The biggest falsehood is the *kufr* (disbelief) and *shirk*, and the next in order comes the common lie and acts of sin. In other words the blessed and favoured servants of Allah avoid attending such meetings. Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ has said that these meetings or assemblies refer to infidels festivals, carnivals and field days; while Sayyidnā Mujāhid and Muḥammad Ibn Ḥanīfah are of the view that they relate to music concerts. According to ‘Amr Ibn Qaiṣ they refer to vulgar and cheap dance parties Zuhri and Imām Mālik term them as liquor drinking parties (Ibn Kathīr). In any case there is no contradiction in all these explanations because all such gatherings come under the definition of assembly of falsehood. The righteous people should avoid such gathering, as even an intentional look at them is tantamount to participation in them. (Maḥzarī)

Some commentators have taken the sentence يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ to mean that they do not give false evidence, which is one of the possible meaning of the word يَشْهَدُونَ (The English translation of the sentence given in the text as "do not witness falsehood" has a slight indication to this interpretation also). It is a well known fact that both Holy Qur’ān and Sunnah declare the false evidence as a great sin and an enormous evil. Bukhārī and Muslim have recorded Sayyidnā ‘Abbās ؓ quoting that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that false evidence is the gravest of the major sins.

Sayyidnā ‘Umar ؓ said that if the offence of giving false evidence is proved against someone, he should be flogged with forty stripes, and then his face be painted black and taken round the market place, and after that put in jail for a long time. (Maḥzarī)

The Eleventh Characteristic

وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا (and when they pass by the absurd things, Pass by with dignity - 72). That is if by chance they happen to pass by immoral gatherings, they walk away with dignity and grace. In other words as

they do not attend such gatherings intentionally, if they happen to pass by them sometimes by chance they just walk away from there in a dignified manner. That is despite their belief that their evil acts are hateful, they do not take pride or regard themselves superior for not indulging in them. Once Sayyidnā Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ happened to pass by an absurd and dissolute gathering, so he did not stop there but simply walked away. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ learnt about this incidence he remarked "Ibn Mas'ūd has become كريم (dignified)" and then recited this verse wherein it is enjoined to walk away from dissolute gatherings with dignity. (Ibn Kathīr)

The Twelveth Characteristic

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّوا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا

And those who, when they are reminded of the verses of their Lord, do not fall at them as deaf and blind ones - 25:73

That is when the blessed servants of Allah are reminded of His verses and the Hereafter, they do not throw themselves upon them as if they were blind and dumb, but pay heed to them like sober and sensible persons, and act upon them. They do not behave like the ignorants or negligent persons as if they have not seen or listened i.e. not understood the message. Two things are mentioned in this verse. One, to fall at Divine revelation i.e. to listen them with full attention. This is a virtuous and commendable act. Second, to fall at the verses like deaf and dumb people which means to listen to the message but without any purpose or commitment and act in a manner that the real message has not been registered, and even if they follow the Qur'ānic message it is not in line with the practices of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ or their followers. Such people follow their own whims based on hearsay, which is as bad as not following the Divine message.

Self-study of religious precepts is not enough but they need to be acted upon in the light of interpretation given by classic scholars

As it is condemned in the verses under study that Divine message is ignored. It is also pointed out with equal emphasis that it is listened and acted upon without due diligence, that is without comprehending the intent and spirit of the precept and according to one's own sweet will. Ibn Kathīr has reported on the authority of Ibn 'Aun that he inquired from

Hadrat Sha'bī رحمه الله تعالى that if he comes across a people who are in the state of *sajdah* (prostration), whether it is correct for him to join them in *sajdah*. Sha'bī رحمه الله تعالى replied in the negative explaining that it would not be correct for him to join in their prostration unless he finds out the purpose of that act. It is not proper for a believer to join in any action without knowing the purport of that act, rather he should seek to know the purpose behind an act before taking it up for himself. When one has not listened the verse of prostration, nor does he know the reason for their prostration it is not allowed for him to go in prostration.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that there is a new tendency among the younger generation and modern educated people to study the Qur'ān but to achieve this purpose they often deem it enough to study the Qur'ān and try to understand it through the translations of the Qur'ān on their own. This practice being against the correct principles of learning something, often makes them fall into misconceptions. It is a well-settled fact that education and knowledge cannot be imparted only through books unless guidance of a teacher is available for explaining the intricacies of the subject which normally go unnoticed by an ordinary reader. It is rather strange why people feel that this basic rule does not apply to Qur'ān and its related subjects and try to indulge in interpreting the Holy Book according to their own wishes. This type of study and interpreting Qur'ān on one's own without the help and guidance of a well qualified teacher also falls under the purview of this verse i.e. "they do not throw themselves upon as if they were blind and dumb". May Allah lead us to the right path.

The Thirteenth Characteristic

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

And those who say, "Our Lord, Give us, from our spouses and our children, coolness of eyes and make us heads of the God-fearing. (25:74)

This verse contains a prayer for one's spouses and children. According to the explanation put forward by Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى one can draw solace from his dear ones (wife and children) if they submit to the way of Allah. That is the true bliss for a man, and if the good health and well being of the wife and children is also added to this, it is also in order.

What is alluded here is that the righteous servants of God do not care about correcting themselves only, but also take care of the virtuous actions of their children and spouse, and keep trying for their improvement, and it is a part of their efforts that they pray Allah to make them take the right path. The second sentence of this verse says **وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا** (and make us heads of the God-fearing - 25:74) Apparently this is a prayer for getting a high status and a source of pride, which is forbidden by other injunctions of the Holy Qur'ān. The Qur'ān says at another place "بَلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا" that is "As for that ultimate Abode (the Hereafter), We assign it to those who intend neither haughtiness on earth nor mischief (28:83). And the (best) end is for the God-fearing - 28:83". Hence, some scholars have commented about this sentence of the verse that everyone is the head or Imām of his family. Thus, if his family members become God fearing, he will automatically be their head or Imām. Therefore, the final outcome is that prayer was not meant for personal aggrandizement, but for the family members to follow the right path. Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī رحمه الله تعالى has also explained about this verse that the prayer contained in it is not meant for a high position or authority for oneself but to request the grant of such a disposition that people try to emulate it in religious deeds and actions, and that it be of benefit to others and thus might fetch the praying people some of its reward. And Sayyidnā Makhḥūl Shāmi رحمه الله تعالى has elucidated that the purpose of the prayer is to implore an exalted status of God consciousness that even the God fearing people may also draw inspiration to follow that. Qurtubī has narrated both these explanations and then commented that the net outcome of both is the same, that the desire for an elated position or high office in religious affairs for attaining reward in the Hereafter is not improper; rather it is allowed. On the other hand in verse **لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا** (who intend neither haughtiness - 28:83) the desire and search for worldly exaltation and authority has been condemned. Here the description about the main traits of 'Ibād-ur-Raḥmān or the perfect believers has been completed. Now their rewards and degrees of exaltation in the Hereafter are related.

أُولَٰئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ (Such people will be rewarded with the high place - 75) The literal meaning of **غُرْفَهُ** (*ghurfah*) is upper story. The righteous people having special closeness to Allah will be given high chambers in Paradise

which will look like stars to common people. (al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Maḏharī)

It is narrated in Musnād of Aḥmad, Bayhaqī, Tirmidhī and Ḥākim on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Mālīk al-Ash'arī that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said "In Paradise there will be such upper Houses that their interior could be seen from outside and the exterior from inside". Ṣaḥābah inquired from him as to who will live in them. Then he ﷺ replied "Those who keep their speech clean and soft, greet every Muslim, feed the poor, and offer Tahajjud prayers at night when others are sleeping." (Maḏharī)

وَيَلْقَوْنَ فِيهَا تَحِيَّةً وَسَلَامًا (And will be received therein with prayers of their eternal life and peace - 25:75). That is beside other boons of Paradise they will have the honour that angels will greet and felicitate them.

Upto this point the traits and deeds of the sincere believers and their rewards and recompense were described. Then in the last verse the infidels and disbelievers have been warned again of the chastisement on which the Sūrah is concluded.

قُلْ مَا يَعْبُودُ بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ (Say (O Prophet) My Lord will never care about you, if you will not invoke Him - 25:77). Different versions are given in the interpretation of this verse, but the one given in the text above is the simplest and straight forward; that is you would have no value or importance before God if you do not call Him and pray to Him. It is because the very purpose of man's creation is that he should worship Allah as mentioned in the verse وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (I have not created Jinn and mankind except to worship Me - 51:56). After declaring the principle that man has no value and importance without worship, the infidels and disbelievers are addressed: فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ that is "since you have belied (the truth)" you are of no consequence before Him. فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا (the punishment will be inseparable from you - 77). That is now this rejection and disbelief have become an integral part of your being and will keep clinging to you until you are thrown in the Fire of Hell forever.

Alḥamdulillāh

The Commentary on

Sūrah Al-Furqān

Ends here.